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SUBJECT: TURIN 2006 WINTER OLYMPICS--USG SITUATION REPORT
(SITREP) #6, 02/12/2006

REF: ROME 406

1. (SBU) The following cable provides information on security, public diplomacy, and consular activities in Turin, Italy, for the 2006 Winter Olympic Games as of 02/12/2006.

2. (SBU) The interagency Olympic Security Coordination (OSC) Office can be contacted on a 24-hour basis at the following numbers:

USG Joint Operations Center (JOC) 39-011-55-99-793/794/564
(tel); 011-39-011-55-99-590 (fax)

USG Threat Integration Center (TIC) 39-011-55-99-790/791
(tel); 011-39-011-55-99-590 (fax).

3. (SBU) Attached is a key for USG acronyms used within this cable: unified USG interagency Olympic Security Operations Center (OSOC); sub-set of OSOC, Joint Operations Center (JOC); sub-set of OSOC, Threat Integration Center (TIC); Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC); First Lady of the United States (FLOTUS); Turin Olympics Organizing Committee (TOROC); International Olympics Organizing Committee (IOC); Public Affairs/Public Diplomacy (PA/PD); Consular Affairs (CA).

KEY EVENTS

4. (U) On 02/11/2006, the first day of Olympics sporting events took place, with residents and visitors alike reveling in the spirit of the Games. The events went off without incident and crowds enjoyed the first medals ceremony, including a fireworks display and a serenade by world-renowned tenor Andrea Bocelli. The enthusiasm of the multinational spectators and the energy of the crowds downtown have emphasized the official Olympics motto that "passion lives here." Italian security forces are visible throughout the city and protests have markedly diminished over the past two days.

SECURITY

5. (U) Terrorist Activity: No activity has been identified. Italian officials remain alert for indications of terrorist operations and OSOC personnel are available for immediate recall to supplement existing 24/7 JOC and TIC staff, should an Olympics-related incident occur.

6. (SBU) Threats: There is no indication of a specific, credible terrorist threat to the Olympic Games. Italy is home to a large Islamic population and the possibility of terrorist operations occurring in Italy cannot be conclusively discounted. Italian authorities have historically been assertive in detecting and deterring extremist activity throughout the country, and the arrest and deportation of individuals of concern in the months leading up to the Olympics has shown that the Italians are on highest alert for problems originating from the Islamic community. In addition to terrorism concerns, Italian anarchist and anti-globalization groups continue to promote their agenda to protest and disrupt the Games. The Italian Government has visibly increased security throughout Turin to counter possible anarchist activity and Italian authorities at the highest levels have publicized their readiness to enact strong measures to ensure the safety of athletes and spectators.

7. (U) Demonstrations/Protests: According to the OSOC liaison to the multi-national Italian National Olympics Information Sharing Center, the web site Independent Media Center (www.indymedia.org) has expressed strong criticism of the Olympic Games and encouraged unspecified actions against Italian law enforcement entities and TOROC. Indymedia has a history of posting calls for action and was the site that

promoted disruptions of the FLOTUS visit by publishing maps showing her movements while in Turin.

18. (U) Concerns persist that large-scale demonstrations will occur in the Turin area over the period 02/17/2006-02/19/2006. Media reports have indicated that protesters from elsewhere in the European Union will travel to Turin to participate in anti-globalization and pro-environment gatherings; however, Belgian, German, Spanish, French, and Greek law enforcement representatives to the National Olympics Information Sharing Center have stated that they have been unable to verify the travel of opposition group members to Turin. All above-named countries will continue to monitor for indications of movement and will report any activity to Italian and OSOC counterparts through the Olympics Information Sharing Center.

19. (U) Incidents: On 02/11/2006, the USOC videographer assigned to the short track and figure skating practice venue requested security assistance from OSOC field elements after a minor altercation with Korean Olympic team representatives. The videographer had been filming the practice of the US short track team when she was requested to stop her activity by the venue press manager and representatives of the Korean team. Upon her refusal, two Korean representatives physically attempted to prevent her from taping. The venue Press Manager contacted OSOC field agents to report the incident, and they provided the videographer with a secure escort from the venue. OSOC elements are prepared to respond in the event that further problems arise during the practice of the US and Korean teams on 02/12/2006.

SECURITY OPERATIONS -----

10. (SBU) USG security activities -- ongoing liaison with host government entities, Olympics security officials, US corporate security and the FLOTUS USSS security detail -- continue.

11. (SBU) According to OSOC field elements, as of 02/11/2006, Italian authorities are searching for a known No-TAV (anti-high-speed train) protester who is in possession of credentials for the mountain Cesana San Sicario venue and who is working on the shooting range for the biathlon. The individual in question has reportedly caused disturbances at the venue and Italian law enforcement plan to revoke his credentials and remove him from the site.

12. (SBU) Over the night of 02/10/2006, the OSOC conducted a text message communications check via cell phone; the results of this test are being used to identify any lapses in OSOC communications capability with security elements throughout the Olympics theater.

13. (SBU) In response to the widely-reported recent outbreak of the Avian Flu virus among migratory birds in southern Italy, the State Department medical professional in Turin will provide a factual briefing to personnel about the virus and the Mission Italy plan of action to address an outbreak.

VIPs ----

14. (SBU) Despite numerous attempts by opposition groups to disrupt their visit, FLOTUS and the Presidential Delegation attended a number of public events without incident on 02/11/2006. The absence of protests underscored the promise of Italian authorities that no actions would be allowed to detract from the visit, which has received generally positive comment in the local media.

15. (SBU) The departure of FLOTUS and the Presidential Delegation was delayed due to adverse weather conditions in the US; FLOTUS was confirmed as wheels up from Turin as of approximately 0930 hrs on 02/12/2006. Daughter Barbara Bush will remain in Italy on private travel until 02/15/2006 and is expected to attend a number of Olympics events. On 02/12/2006, she will be present at mountain venue events; OSOC continues to work with the USSS security detail to provide any necessary security assistance for the duration of Barbara Bush's stay in Turin.

16. (SBU) In remarks prior to her departure, FLOTUS expressed satisfaction with her visit. She had previously thanked Italian security officials for the attention they paid to the security of the Presidential Delegation during their stay in Italy.

PENDING MATTERS -----

17. (U) The theft of a TOROC vehicle pass remains unresolved. OSOC continues to express concern about the incident and to interact with Italian counterparts to identify possible security concerns related to the missing pass.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

18. (U) On 02/12/2006, the focus of the media included the first discovery of the Avian Flu virus in dead migratory birds in southern Italy. Most dailies continued to carry heavy coverage of the Olympics, including generally positive stories regarding the start of sporting events, and detailed information on the FLOTUS visit. In addition, various sources noted that concerns persist among security experts that large-scale demonstrations will take place on 02/17/2006-02/19/2006. The following summary contains highlights from local media:

19. (U) FLOTUS: Turin-based national daily La Stampa published a largely factual and positive account of the FLOTUS visit to Turin. The article described in detail her appearance at the University of Turin and noted with some surprise that the among the books donated by FLOTUS to the University library was the "bible" of the No-Global movement: "No Logo: No Space, No Choice, No Jobs." The article also commented on the elaborate security provided for the FLOTUS visit, remarking that strict controls, including street closures and snipers, were in place for her movements.

20. (U) Il Giornale and La Repubblica provided similar positive commentary on the FLOTUS appearances on 02/11/2006. The Il Giornale article noted FLOTUS' appreciation for her "splendid lunch" at a local restaurant and highlighted her remarks linking the Olympics with intercultural and educational exchange. La Repubblica featured the FLOTUS visit to the University library, noting that the threatened demonstrations by opposition groups were hardly noticeable, and cited FLOTUS' appreciation for the warm welcome she received in Turin.

21. (U) Communist daily Il Manifesto contained muted coverage of the FLOTUS visit, commenting that FLOTUS' remarks on dialogue between nations and mutual understanding were ironic, given US actions around the world.

22. (U) Demonstrations/Protests: Il Manifesto printed the schedule for the upcoming no-TAV (high-speed train), anti-globalization demonstrations planned to take place in the vicinity of Olympics alpine events in Val de Susa from 02/17/2006-02/19/2006. (Information regarding the planned protests may be found at www.ombravallesus.it and www.ilgrandecortile.it.) Italian authorities have repeatedly stated that they view opposition activities over the weekend of 02/17/2006 to be a primary security concern.

23. (U) The Public Affairs Office in Turin may be reached at 39-011-55-99-368.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

24. (U) On 02/11/2006, the Consular Office in Turin received four new requests for assistance from American citizens. All requests involved the replacement of lost/stolen passports. Two individuals have already come into the CA office in order to apply for their new passports, while one will visit the office on 02/12/2006. One individual located the "lost" passport prior to appearing at the office.

25. (U) To date, the majority of requests for passport assistance have involved the replacement of documents lost to pickpocketing, indicating a trend of petty theft in Turin. Crowded public transportation and increased tourist activity has created an ideal atmosphere for pickpocketing. CA is aware of this trend and is prepared to provide assistance to victims as necessary.

26. (U) Prior to the commencement of the Olympics, CA engaged in intensive outreach with local emergency services and hotels in Turin to disseminate the consular contact numbers and to sensitize them to the range of services CA can provide to American citizens. This outreach has been successful, as the requests for service to date have involved initial phone contact with the Consular Office based on information provided by hotel and other staff.

27. (U) The Consular Office may be contacted at the following numbers: 011-5599-330 (tel.); 011-5599-551 (fax). Additional information may be found at <http://milan.usconsulate.gov>.
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